

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICEAPPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

BE IT KNOWN that I, Charles P. Hall, a resident of the State of Florida and citizen of the United States of America, have invented a certain new and useful improvement in a Laundry Basket and Hamper Having Selectable Internal Compartments thereof, of which the following is a Specification:

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This is a continuation-in-part of Application Pending Serial No. 09/457,660, filed May 4, 2000.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an integrated laundry basket and laundry hamper including therein selectable compartments adapted for purposes of pre-sorting of types of clothing at the point of insertion of used or dirty laundry into the hamper or basket.

Laundry baskets and hampers are, of course, well known in the art. However, to the knowledge of the within inventor, there does not exist an integrated laundry basket and hamper having selectably configurable internal compartments and, as well, aeration means formed within the vertical walls of

the hamper. The present invention therefore responds to a long-felt need in the art for such a laundering aid.

0985:1995-051001

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The instant invention comprises a substantially solid rectangular structure including integral vertical side walls formed of a preferably resilient material, such as plastic polymer, and including therewith, for purposes of aeration, a multiplicity of apertures exhibiting an aesthetic geometry. Internally of the solid rectangular structure, there are provided a plurality of co-parallel tracks proportioned for the slidable receipt of substantially vertical partition panels to thereby provide selectively different internal compartments to the hamper/laundry basket for purposes of pre-separation, at the time of insertion of an article of clothing into the hamper, in accordance with any one of a number of criteria, such as dark versus light clothes, clothes requiring outside laundering versus machine washable clothes, and "delicate" articles of clothing versus standard wash types of clothing. The inventive hamper/laundry basket is also optionally provided with a snap-fittable cover which is particularly useful when the laundry basket is employed as a hamper, as opposed to use as a laundry basket. Upon removal of such the snap-fittable cover, laundry may easily be inserted or removed therefrom. The void space defined by said apertures covers between one-third and two-thirds of the area of each sidewall of the structure.

It is, accordingly, an object of the present invention to provide an integrated hamper and laundry basket having, internally thereto, means for the pre-separation of various types or classes of laundry.

It is another object to provide a hamper/laundry basket of the above type in which the position and the location of internal compartments thereof may be selectably changed as may be desired by the end user.

It is a further object of the invention to provide a hamper/laundry basket of the above type which is provided with an aesthetically pleasing pattern of apertures within vertical surfaces thereof for purposes of aeration of the clothing therein and for decorative purposes when the hamper/laundry basket is used as a piece of furniture within a home of the user.

The above and yet other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the hereinafter set forth Brief Description of the Drawings, Detailed Description of the Invention and Claims appended herewith.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a diagonal perspective view of the inventive hamper/laundry basket.

Fig. 2 is a top plan view of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a front plan view of Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 is an exploded view showing the relationship of the cover of the hamper/laundry basket to the laundry basket itself.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

With respect to the perspective view of Fig. 1, the present inventive hamper/laundry basket may be seen to comprise a substantially solid rectangular structure formed of a preferably resilient material such as plastic polymer. Lateral surfaces 12 of the basket are provided with a multiplicity of apertures 14 which may assume any one of a number of geometries. In the view of Fig. 1, apertures 14 have been provided in the shape of hexagons. Any such aesthetically pleasing geometry may be employed for apertures 14.

It has been determined that the structural integrity of lateral surfaces 12 require that the void space of said apertures 14 comprise more than two-thirds of the area of said surfaces 12. Further, to ensure adequate aeration of the laundry within the hamper, the void space of the apertures must comprise at least one-third of the area of each lateral surface. Thereby, the void space must fall in a range of one to two-thirds of the area of each lateral surface.

Basket 10 includes a mouth 16 which having a peripheral lip 18 which is characterized by a generally male geometry. Mouth 16 is also characterized by handles 20 which are provided at opposite sides 22 of the basket 10. See also Fig. 2. Provided internally to front and back walls 24 of the structure are vertical channels 26 which are proportioned for slip-fittable receipt of vertical partition panels 28, the function of which is to provide for selectable separation

of the basket 10 into two or three compartments, as may be desired by the user. This is further shown in the front plan view of Fig. 3. It is noted that through this structure there is provided a hamper/laundry basket by which a user may pre-sort clothing before it is deposited into the basket. For example, clothing may be sorted by color, fabric, or any other criteria potentially useful to the individual that will later wash or clean the clothing in the hamper. Such separation may also include separation of clothes to be dry cleaned from clothes to be machine wash in the home. It is to be appreciated that the vertical partitions 28 are removable and, thereby, the size of the internal compartments may be varied, as a function use requirements from that of three, two, or simply a single compartment wherein use of the slidably insertable interior partitions would not be required.

In the exploded view of Fig. 4 is shown top 30 of the basket 10 which is proportioned for complementary engagement with lip/mouth 16/18 by virtue of female engaging element 32. Cover 30 is further provided with integral projecting cylindrical elements 34 which are complementary with holes 36 situated just below edge 16 of mouth 18 of the basket 10. See also Fig. 4. Accordingly, cover 30 may be employed at the option of the user, as a function of need which may arise to transport the entire basket 10 as, for example, when a filled laundry basket must be transported a distance to the site of washing.

While there has been shown and described the preferred embodiment of the instant invention it is to be appreciated that the invention may be embodied otherwise than is herein specifically shown and described and that, within said embodiment, certain changes may be made in the form and arrangement of the parts without departing from the underlying ideas or principles of this invention as set forth in the Claims appended herewith.

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